

DANA

AN IRISH MAGAZINE OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

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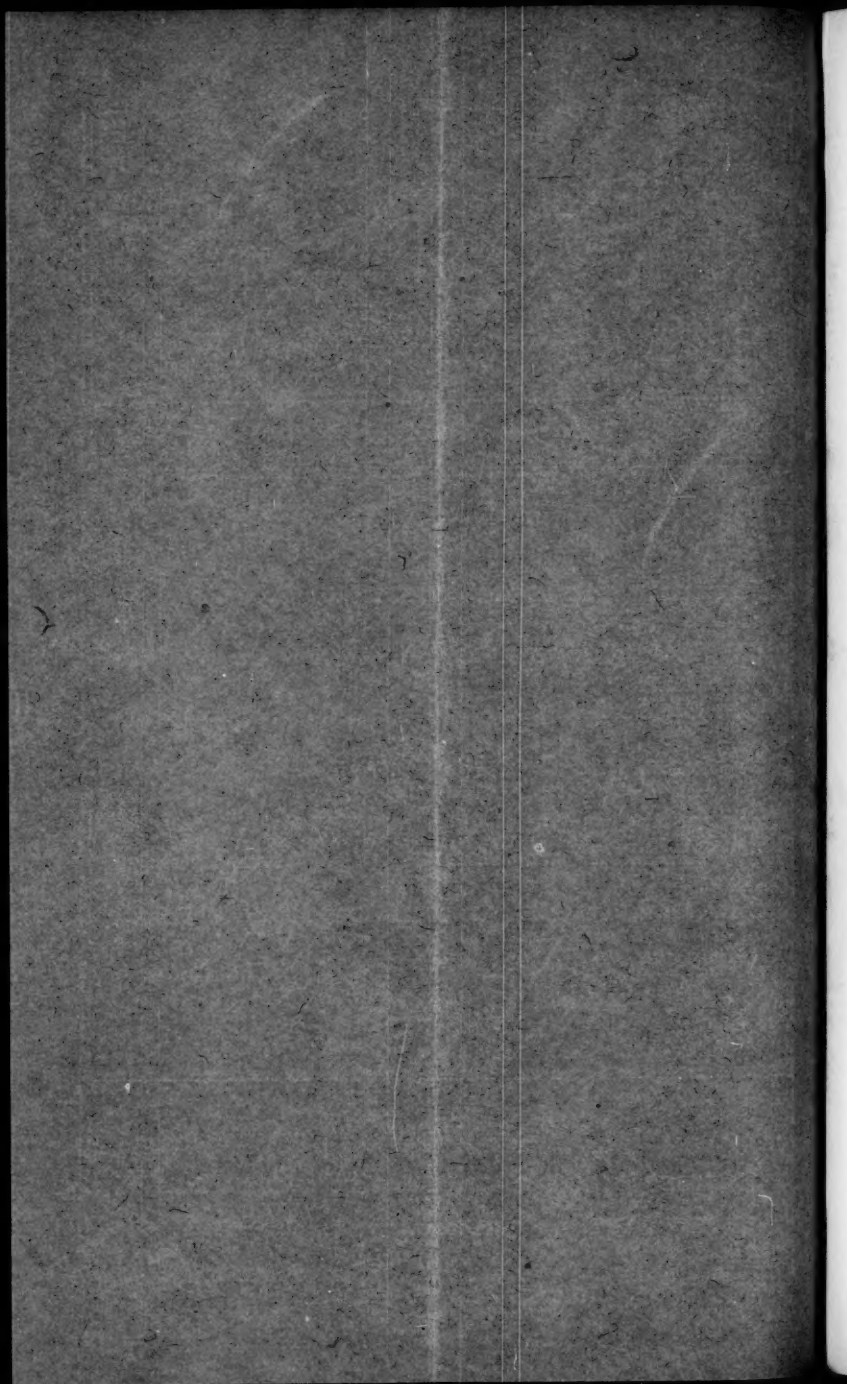
Poetry

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AN IRISH MAGAZINE OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

PHYSICAL FORCE IN LITERATURE.

THE theory of physical force has been gradually ebbing away from politics in Ireland. It required men to be brave; and for those who are willing to risk their lives we always have respect. When a man is ready to shoulder pike or rifle for an idea, he regards his ideal as more important than life, and however he may pervert those ideals in expression, I have never felt a doubt but that in such a case the man's heart has been made holy by some sacred fire. There are nobler ways of settling the right or wrong of a question, but the heroes of gentleness and love are few, and if a man is unable to live this life, it is better he should take some course which at least demands of him a sacrifice. But while much may be said for the man who, seeing no higher way, decides to establish his right by force, there is nothing at all to be said for the physical force theory in literature which has come to be accepted by so many journalists in Ireland. To adopt it in life shows courage. To bring it into literature or argument shows that the man is a coward. He runs away from the battle while seeming to take a sword. It never stays in the least the march of the conquering idea, for an idea once put forward can only be overcome by a superior beauty or truth. When a writer or speaker suggests that his opponent is a liar, or one who acts from a mean motive, when he tries to shout him down, he is not only a coward in his own cause, for he does not speak for it, but he is a recreant of the light, and has enlisted under the banner of the Dark Immortal, no matter what Holy Name he may profess to worship. In literature, to fight well you must be gentle. The spear which will bring down the lion is flung in vain against the wind. And ideas are like air; they flow by the flung stone and go on their purifying or destroying course. Even that Dark Angel is not hindered from entering the heart when we name him truly; but he shrinks from the light. It seems to be the way for many in Ireland, either through hatred of thought, or through incapacity to

think, to content themselves with abuse. They shout "bigot," "sourface," continually; and at any attempt to reason out the right or wrong of a question, the chorus of abuse grows more vehement and angry, until the shouters are at last stupified and happy, having deafened themselves to anything but their own voices. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you," said the founder of a religion which is hardly known in Ireland: and it is a curious law in life that what we most condemn, we have most in ourselves. Let a man say of another, "He is vain," and he speaks out of a self-appreciation which whispers to him that he at least is free from this fault. Let him accuse another of anger, and it is strange how irritable he will become thinking of that other one who is so unreasonable, and so on: through all fierce imputations runs the voice of that self-same sin which is condemned. I know those who condemn most will be most angry in repudiation of the truth of this; but, if we take it to ourselves, the word of the Lord will light us through strange abysses in our hearts. It is amazing to hear these cries of "bigot" from people who refuse to argue, and of "shallow" from people who do their thinking by proxy. The criticism of "Ireland in the New Century" illustrates the physical force element in argument. The most eminent critic never found it necessary to read the book. He relied rightly upon his fellow countrymen to join him in condemning it also without perusal; and we had the strange spectacle of boards and councils denouncing with even more vehemence the book which His Eminence condemned. Out of another's knowledge they spoke, and with more energy. Sir Horace Plunkett was a bigot, a charlatan, a placeman, shallow, an oily politician, a libeller of his countrymen. The author is happily a man of too high a character to be deterred from the course he has taken by such cries. But they were astonishing phrases to be excited by a book written in such a temper, with such moderation, with such an evident desire to be fair. It would have been wonderful, indeed, if coming from a Unionist, it would have altogether pleased those of us who wish for separation, or if coming from a Protestant, his comments on the economic effect of Catholicism in Ireland would have been willingly accepted by members of the Catholic Church. But those portions of the book, a very small part of it, were alone criticised: by those it was judged: and the whole aim of the author, which was to show how certain economic deficiencies in Irish character could be

best remedied, was ignored, or he was told that he libelled Irish people for suggesting such a thing as deficiency of character, as if, forsooth, we were all saints, and not like the rest of humanity, pretty mean. Even on these debatable issues, it was rare to find anyone saying the many things which might rightly be urged against the author. His clerical critics were proud where they should have been humble, and humble where they should have been proud. For to the suggestion of having erred from the right way, the minister of Christ, if his eyes are fixed on that perfectness of the Father, can only say in humility, "We are all of us sinners"; but with one who thought they built up too many temples of prayer, they ought not to have argued and brought forward statistics, but should have said like that wise King, after the temple was built into which all the riches of Israel were poured: "Behold the Heavens and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee. How much less this house which I have builded."

It is not the expression of difference of opinion which is complained of. It is the thoughtless savagery of the expression. Everyone has a right to express his opinions, but no one has a right to sully his own cause, whether it is religious or political, by untimpered abuse of his opponents. This book, at least, was written by one who has spent the best part of his life working for Ireland, and for all classes in Ireland, and if it did not merit a respectful hearing, no living Irishman is entitled to one. It is surely time for us to get rid of that blind spirit which refuses to see sincerity outside its own beliefs, which confines all the virtues within the narrow boundary of its own expansion, its own creed, its own party. Every creed and every party has its own reason for being. Its existence has been called forth by some necessity of human nature. The true lover of his country, who desires the solidarity of his race, will rise above external distinctions; he will try to explain one section of his countrymen to the other. Alas, we have few lovers of our race, though we have many loyal adherents to this or that tradition. That loyalty is much, but not so great as loyalty to the whole, to the great idea. What Irish journalists or public men have tried to understand Ireland as a whole and to explain one extreme to another, showing the best of each and not the worst? To number them the fingers of one hand would be too many. But if one essayed it, the labour would not be lost. One wise voice, speaking justly for the whole, would be worth all the chieftains of class or creed. It is our misfortune that such

voices are never heard, for in our country the average man, whether from poverty or some other cause, reads only one paper and hears only the case as put by the partisans of one idea, and he soon learns to mistrust his neighbour across the street. It is a grave responsibility which the pure partisan takes upon himself when he explains a policy secure in the knowledge that his hearers or readers will hear no other voice. Should not the sense of his position lead him to state the case truly as it is put by the opponent, and then to answer a true argument? But to have a sentence taken apart from its context, an error of judgment exhibited as the whole argument, an irritable phrase as revealing the complete character of the man, was the justice meted to the author of the book referred to. The criticism was as bad on one side as the other. The Ulster papers selected and quoted with delight the same sentences which the Catholics condemned. All they wanted was to find some empty echo of the prejudices of their readers, for no Irish paper, paying a dividend, can bring itself to tell really unpleasant truths to its readers. While the party man listens to the shouts of his audience and enjoys his paltry triumph of an hour, he forgets his defeat in the everlasting battle between good and evil, between nobility and littleness, which is the only real battle to be fought in life. It is a sad truth that in Ireland every cause is injured more by its adherents than by its opponents. They break up from within; for the spirit in man, always unconsciously yearning for an infinite life, after hearing awhile the echo of its present mood, grows restless and rebels, and listens to another voice which will take it out of itself and further on its eternal journey. How many good causes grow hateful to us because of their advocates, who will not learn that to be generous, to have a fine humanity on one's side, will do more for it than a thousand logical arguments. Life is more to man than circumstance. I would, though desiring separation, sooner live with a kindly Unionist than a bitter Nationalist. Men will finally cling to the best people and forsake creeds and causes, and they will be right, for humanity is a better cause than any party can show, and it is the plan of nature that parties, races, and creeds, are only preliminary schools to train the manhood it means to inherit the earth. It is possible for a party or creed to gain the letter and lose the spirit of their hope. It may be that we shall have a Catholic or Protestant country without any religion, or self-government and a people not worth governing. Everything is howled

down here except a facile orthodoxy. I would rather see four millions of Irish people disunited and thinking out policies for themselves, than an Ireland united under any policy at present known to them. The latter would only unite them in some forceless platitude. Through independent thought there is some hope that a policy with the will of many people behind it might finally emerge. It is because they are not allowed to think, that Irishmen are so apathetic in matters of national importance. The country is strewn with the wrecks of leagues and societies of one kind or another, and they all fell through or are falling through, because independent thought is forbidden. The moment a member does not see eye to eye with the majority he is nicknamed in some bitter phrase. It is impossible for a man or a country to make great efforts unless they have climbed to their convictions through long thought, through many doubts, through the exploration of many paths; for it is only then that men have faith and knowledge and the strength of many dreams behind them to sustain them in great labours. The life of a country is in its heretics, its doubters of all accepted faiths and formulas, who yet have faith in an ideal. Without such, a country becomes a dead sea of humanity. It may be that the doubters will find the old faiths best after all; but if they do they will have gained their spirit and their everlasting life, and will be masters in the guild. But it is useless pointing out the long generations who have had such hopes and such beliefs. The authority of twenty centuries back of a creed is no excuse for a man laying aside the exercise of his reason. The fact that Parnell, Davis, Mitchell and Tone thought out the problem of Ireland in their time does not absolve the Irish Nationalist to-day from thinking it out and as thoroughly. When I hear a man saying "I follow so and so," I am inclined to think that he is turning his back on his leader who came to be so by virtue of an independent mind. Every effort to think out Irish problems sincerely should be welcomed even if many disagreeable things are said, and if the nationality of the Irish mind can only be preserved by unargumentative abuse of those on the other side the sooner it is let perish the better.

Æ.

MOODS AND MEMORIES.

VI.

OCTAVE BARRÈS liked his friends to come to his studio, and a few of us who believed in his talent used to drop in during the afternoon, and little by little I got to know every picture, every sketch ; but one never knows everything that a painter has done, and one day as I came I saw a full-length portrait that I had never seen before on the easel.

"It was in the back room turned to the wall," he said, "I took it out thinking that the Russian prince who ordered the Pegasus decoration might buy it," and he turned away not liking to hear my praise of it ; for it neither pleases a painter to hear his early works praised nor abused. "I painted it before I knew how to paint," and standing before me, his palette in his hand, he expounded his new æstheticism : that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century all painting had been done first in monochrome and then glazed, and that what we know as solid painting had been invented by Greuze. He told how one day in the Louvre he had perceived something in Delacroix, something not wholly satisfactory ; this something had, however, set him thinking. But it was Rubens who had revealed the secret ! It was Rubens who had taught him how to paint ! He admitted that there was danger in retracing one's steps, in beginning one's education over again ; but what help was there for it, since painting was not taught in the schools.

I had heard all he had to say before, and could not change my belief that every man must live in the ideas of his time, be they good or bad. It is easy to say that we must only adopt Rubens' method and jealously guard against any infringement on our personality ; but in art our personality is determined by the methods we employ, and Octave's portrait interested me more than the Pegasus decoration, or the three pink Venuses holding a basket of flowers above their heads. The portrait was crude and violent, but so was the man that had painted it ; it had been painted when he was a disciple of Manet's, and the methods of Manet were in agreement with my friend's temperament. We are all impressionists to-day, we are

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eager to note down what we feel and see, and the carefully prepared rhetorical manner of Rubens was as incompatible with Octave's temperament as the manner of John Milton is with mine. There was a thought of Goya in the background, in the contrast between the grey and the black, and there was something of Manet's simplification in the face, but these echoes were faint, nor did they matter, for they were of our time. In looking at his model he had seen and felt something ; he had noted this harshly, crudely, but he noted it ; and to do this is after all the main thing, His sitter had inspired him. The word inspired offended him ; I withdrew it ; I said that he had been fortunate in his model, and he admitted that : to see that thin olive-complexioned girl with fine delicate features and blue-black hair lying close about her head like feathers—she wore her hair as a blackbird wears his wing—compelled one to paint ; and after admiring the face I admired the black silk dress he had painted her in, a black silk dress covered with black lace. She wore grey pearls in her ears, and pearls upon her neck.

I was interested in the quality of the painting, so different from Octave's present painting, but I was more interested in the woman herself. The picture revealed to me something in human nature that I had never seen before, something that I had never thought of. The soul in this picture was so intense that I forgot the painting, and began to think of her. She was unlike anyone I had ever met in Octave Barré's studio ; a studio beloved of women ; the women one met there seemed to be of all sorts, but in truth they were all of a sort. They began to arrive about four o'clock in the afternoon, and they stayed on until they were sent away. He allowed them to play the piano and sing to him ; he allowed them, as he would phrase it, to *grouiller* about the place, and they talked of the painters they had sat to, of their gowns, and they showed us their shoes and their garters. He heeded them hardly at all, walking to and fro thinking of his painting, of his archaic painting. I often wondered if his appearance counted for anything in his renunciation of modern methods, and certainly his appearance was a link of association ; he did not look like a modern man, but like a sixteenth century baron ; his beard and his broken nose and his hierarchial air contributed to the resemblance ; the jersey he wore reminded one of a cuirass, a coat of mail. Even in his choice of a dwelling-place he seemed instinctively to avoid the modern ; he had found a studio in a street, the

name of which no one had ever heard before ; it was found with difficulty ; and the studio, too, it was hidden behind great crumbling walls, in the middle of a plot of ground in which someone was growing cabbages. Octave was always, as he would phrase it, "*dans une deche épouvantable*," but he managed to keep a thoroughbred horse in the stable at the end of the garden, and this horse was ordered as soon as the light failed. He would say, "*Mes amis et mes amies, je regrette, mais mon cheval m'attend.*" And the women liked to see him mount, and many thought, I am sure, that he looked like a Centaur as he rode away.

But who was this refined girl? this—a painting tells things that cannot be translated into words—this olive-skinned girl that might have sat to Raphael for a Virgin? So different from Octave's usual women, they were of the Montmartre kin ; but this woman might be a Spanish princess. Remembering that Octave had said he had taken out the portrait hoping that the Russian who had ordered the Pegasus might buy it, the thought struck me that she might be the Russian prince's mistress. His mistress ! Oh, what fabulous fortune ! What might her history be ? I burned to hear it, and wearied of Octave's seemingly endless chatter about his method of painting ; I had heard all he was saying many times before, but I listened to it all again, and to propitiate him I regretted that the picture was not painted in his present manner, "for there are good things in the picture," I said, "and the model—you seem to have been lucky with your model."

"Yes, she was nice to paint from, but it was difficult to get her to sit. A *concierge's* daughter—you wouldn't think it, would you?" My astonishment amused him, and he began to laugh. "You don't know her?" he said. "That is Marie Pellegrin," and when I asked him where he had met her he told me, at Alphonsine's ; but I did not know where Alphonsine's was.

"I'm going to dine there to-night. I'm going to meet her ; she's going back to Russia with the Prince ; she has been staying in the Quartier Bréda on her holiday. *Sacre nom !* Half-past five, and I haven't washed my brushes yet !"

In answer to my question, what he meant by going to the Quartier Bréda for a holiday, he said :

"I'll tell you all about that in the carriage."

But no sooner had we got into the carriage than he remembered that he must leave word for a woman who had promised to sit to him, and swearing that a message

would not delay us for more than a few minutes he directed the coachman. We were shown into a drawing-room, and the lady ran out of her bedroom, wrapping herself as she ran in a *peignoir*, and the sitting was discussed in the middle of a polished *parquet* floor. We at last returned to the carriage, but we were hardly seated when he remembered another appointment. He scribbled notes in the lodges of the *concierges*, and between whiles told me all he knew of the story of Marie Pellegrin. This delicate woman that I had felt could not be of the Montmartre kin was the daughter of a *concierge*, on the Boulevard Extérieur. She had run away from home at fifteen, had danced at the Elysée Montmartre.

Sa jupe avait des trous,
Elle aimait des voyous,
Ils ont des yeux si doux.

But one day a Russian prince had caught sight of her, and had built her a palace in the Champs Elysées; but the Russian prince and his palace bored her.

The stopping of the carriage interrupted Octave's narrative. "Here we are," he said, and he seized a bell hanging on a jangling wire, and the green door in the crumbling wall opened, and I saw an undersized woman. I saw Alphonsine; and her portrait, a life-sized caricature drawn by Octave, faced me from the white-washed wall of the hen-coop. He had drawn her two cats purring about her legs, and had written under it, "Ils viennent apres le mou." I think there was one tree in her garden; a tent had been stretched from wall to wall, and a seedy-looking waiter was laying the tables, placing bottles of wine in front of each knife and fork, and bread in long sticks at regular intervals. He was constantly disturbed by the ringing of the bell, and had to run to the door to admit the company. Here and there I recognised faces that I had already seen in the studio, Clementine, who last year was studying the part of Elsa and this year was singing, "La femme de feu, la cui, la cui, la cuisinière," in a *café chantant*; and Margaret Byron who had just retreated from Russia, a disastrous campaign hers was said to have been. The greater number were *hors concours*. Alphonsine's was to the aged courtesan what Chelsea hospital is to the aged soldier. It was a sort of human garden full of the sound and colour of October.

I scrutinized the crowd. How could any one of these women interest the woman whose portrait I had seen in Barrès studio? That one, for instance, whom I saw every morning in the Rue des Martyres going marketing, a

basket on her arm. Search as I would I could not find a friend for Marie among the women nor a lover among the men,—neither of those two stout middle-aged men with large whiskers, who had probably once been stockbrokers, nor the withered journalist whom I heard speaking to Octave about a duel he had fought recently ; nor the little sandy Scotchman whose French was not understood by the women and whose English was nearly unintelligible to me ; nor the man who looked like a head-waiter—Alphonse's lover ; he had been a waiter, and he told you with the air of Napoleon describing Waterloo that he had "created" a certain fashionable café on the Boulevard. I could not attribute any one of these men to Marie ; and Octave spoke of her with indifference ; she had interested him to paint, and now he hoped she would get the Russian to buy her picture.

"But she's not here," I said.

"She'll be here presently," Octave answered, and he went on talking to Clementine, a fair pretty woman whom one saw every night at the *Rat Mort*. And it was just when the soup plates were being taken away I saw a young woman dressed in black crossing the garden. It was she, Marie Pellegrin.

She wore a dress similar to the one she wore in her portrait, a black silk covered with lace, and her black hair was swathed about her shapely little head. She was her portrait and something more. Her smile was her own, a sad little smile that seemed to come out of a depth of her being, and her voice was a little musical voice, irresponsible as a bird's, and during dinner I noticed how she broke into speech abruptly as a bird breaks into song, and she stopped as abruptly. I never saw a woman so like herself, and sometimes her beauty brought a little mist into my eyes, and I lost sight of her or very nearly, and I went on eating mechanically. Dinner seemed to end suddenly, and before I knew that it was over we were getting up from table.

As we went towards the house where coffee was being served Marie asked me if I played cards, but I excused myself, saying that I would prefer to sit and look at her; and just then a thin woman with red hair, who had arrived at the same time as Marie and who had sat next her at dinner, was introduced to me, and I was told that she was Marie's intimate friend, and that the two lived together whenever Marie returned to Montmartre. She was known as *La Glue*, her real name was Victorine, she had sat for Manet's picture of Olympe, but that was years ago. The face was thinner, but I recognised the red hair and the

brown eyes, small eyes set closely, reminding one of *des petits verres de cognac*. Her sketch book was being passed round, and as it came into my hands I noticed that she did not wear stays and was dressed in old grey woollen. She lit cigarette after cigarette and leaned over Marie with her arm about her shoulder, advising her what cards to play. The game was baccarat, and in a little while I saw that Marie was losing a great deal of money, and a little later I saw *La Glue* trying to persuade her away from the card table.

"One more deal." That deal lost her the last louis she had placed on the table. "Someone will have to pay my cab," she said.

We were going to the Elysée Montmartre, and Alphonse lent her a couple of louis, *pour passer sa soirée*, and we all went away in carriages, the little horses straining up the steep streets; the plumes of the women's hats floating over the carriage hoods. Marie was in one of the front carriages, and was waiting for us on the high steps leading from the street to the *bal*.

"It's my last night," she said, "the last night I shall see the Elysée for many a month."

"You'll soon be back again?"

"You see I have been offered five hundred thousand francs to go to Russia for three years. Fancy three years without seeing the Elysée," and she looked round as an angel might look upon Paradise out of which she is about to be driven. "The trees are beautiful," she said, "they're like a fairy tale," and that is exactly what they were like, rising into the summer darkness, unnaturally green above the electric lights. In the middle of a circle of white globes the orchestra played upon an *estrade*, and everyone whirled his partner as if she were a top. "I always sit over there under the trees in the angle," she said; and she was about to invite me to come to sit with her, when her attention was distracted from me; the people had drawn together into groups, and I heard the people whispering, "That's Marie Pellegrin." Seeing her coming, her waiter with much ostentation began to draw aside tables and chairs, and in a few minutes she was sitting under her tree, she and *La Glue* together, their friends about them, Marie distributing absinthe, brandy and cigarettes. A little procession suddenly formed under the trees and came towards her, and Marie was presented with a great basket of flowers, and all her company with bouquets; and a little cheer went up from different parts of the *bal*, "*Vive Marie Pellegrin, la reine de l'Elysée*."

GEORGE MOORE.

(To be continued.)

TWO SONGS.

I.

Dear they are praising your beauty
 The grass and the sky.
 The sky in a silence of wonder,
 The grass in a sigh.

I too would sing for your praising
 Dearest, had I
 Speech as the whispering grass,
 Or the silent sky.

These have an art for the praising
 Beauty so high.
 Sweet, you are praised in a silence,
 Sung in a sigh.

II.

To the wind the trees bow,
 And the sedge to the little breeze,
 And my heart to you, white brow,
 And deeper than these.

When the wind passes
 And the little breezes die,
 The sedge will be raised from the grasses,
 The trees to the quiet sky.

Trees will find homage new,
 And the sedge unmindful be,
 But my heart bows to you
 White brow, eternally.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.

THE GAELIC LEAGUE AND POLITICS.

IN the face of oft-expressed opinions to the contrary, I hold an interest in politics to be one of the first duties of man. By politics, I mean interest in public affairs, the formation and expression of opinion upon them, and the exercise of such influence as is at our command in placing proper men, of right opinions, in representative positions. In few countries is attention to politics more necessary than in Ireland; in few are the benefits that have been derived from such attention more apparent; and in few countries is more to be hoped from the continued political activity of the people. Apart even from benefit to ourselves, a heavy responsibility lies upon us regarding the lives and happiness of other peoples. We insist upon having our share of employment in, and emoluments derived from, Government service abroad under the British flag; we cannot, therefore, divest ourselves of our corresponding responsibilities; whilst our history and traditions fit us for arriving at wiser and more sympathetic views concerning the treatment of peoples brought under our influence than those generally formed by the other partners in the United Kingdom.

Now to those who, like myself, watched with regret the gradual disappearance of the Irish language, under the circumstances of the past sixty years, the revival due to the genius of Dr. Hyde, Dr. Joyce, Father O'Growney, the Gaelic League, and others, is as gratifying as it was unexpected. It has struck chords and answered yearnings in the hearts of our people. It has fostered self-respect. It has opened up sources of pure and elevated enjoyment, and it has brought fresh interest and wider views of life to many of the humblest of our dwellers in town and country. I have been a member of the Gaelic League for many years, and for several of those years gave myself to the study of Irish. Although, with a defective memory, I commenced too late to acquire aught but the rudiments of the old tongue, what I have learned and read will be a pleasure to me for the remainder of my life, and I can well conceive what the study must be to those who have youth and abilities to prosecute it.

Turning aside, however, from the Gaelic League for a moment: it must be evident to studious Irishmen that the

political upturning of the Land League and the National League were essential for the future peace and happiness of Ireland. It would, perhaps, have been better in the long run if such had been continued until Home Rule had been obtained. But it was not to be. The continued strain through so many years would have been too much for any people. The differences that arose between the representatives of the people (of whom I was one) were no greater, and perhaps no bitterer, than might have arisen amongst the leaders of other peoples similarly circumstanced; but such as they were, they brought discredit upon politics, and still further disinclined the minds of our people for sustained political effort.

The unreasonable pretensions, as they seem to me, of a section of Gaelic League thought, represent a not unnatural recoil from the dominance which politics had so long maintained over every other interest in Ireland. None the less, however, are these pretensions to be deplored. It is impossible that a language movement, an art movement, or a manufacture movement can ever take the place of a political movement. As long as questions of peace and war, of land and labour, of housing, of taxation, of provision for old age, and a thousand other questions that might be named, and above all the obtaining of the proper machinery for dealing with all these matters—as long as these exist, a political movement of some kind there must and will be, however apathetic things might become for a season.

Now, a section of thought in the Gaelic League has, unnecessarily for the object the League has primarily at heart, and in the long run, mistakenly, sought to draw an amount of energy from politics, and to produce in the younger generation a feeling that politics do not matter—a fatal error, since it is just upon such apathy that the cause of reaction in every country flourishes. We can, indeed, imagine too much attention given to the preservation of a distinctive language numbing the acute sense of political wrong that should subsist in our minds concerning British interference in our national affairs. Wales is no nearer than we to that independence in her internal affairs inseparable from the idea of nationality. Scotland, speaking a common language with England, is nearer to it. Alsace, speaking German, preferred union with France. Switzerland, speaking four main languages and innumerable patois, makes one nation. Norway is joined to Sweden, speaking a different language, and is separated from Denmark, speaking essentially the same. And it is a mistake to break in

upon and seek to annul the influence of our traditions for the past hundred or two hundred years—in truth, since the days of Swift. I read the following in the official organ of the Gaelic League :—

“Ireland made her great mistake about the year 1782. when she sought to realise herself as a separate nation in a common civilization with England. Since 1782 we gave away everything . . . Last century will live as a kind of lacuna in the history of Ireland. It went astray before its dawn, and it did not realise that it lost its way until almost at its close.”

There is nothing that has come under my observation in Gaelic literature that could inspire national ideals suitable for the present age of the world, to the same degree and as definitely as the writings and utterances of Swift and Molyneux, Grattan and the United Irishmen, O'Connell, the Forty-eight men, and the Fenians. Splendid individual examples have we in previous Irish history of holiness, of bravery, and of patriotism. But could we afford to blot out from the thoughts of our children the memory of those I have named, English-speaking as they were for the most part? Could we countenance the dissipation of traditions and an atmosphere of thought which, to say the least, tends to nourish a national ideal and raise men to give effect to it? A language movement in itself need not be political. But if its tendencies were permitted to become essentially “non-political,” and it assumed to take the place of politics, it would, in truth, become essentially political in a most mischievous sense.

I am in favour, then, of everything Irish that is good, and true, and useful, and beautiful. But the expression an “Irish Ireland” does not commend itself to me. Ireland should be ready to take to herself and assimilate everything that is best, wherever it may come from. Irishmen, it must not be forgotten, have had their full share in the invention and evolution of much in modern and nominally non-Irish civilisation which bears the name of other peoples.

Irish music, Irish song, Irish literature should hold a large place in our thoughts; few outsiders will ever know what they are to those who have made them a part of their lives. But to discourage the music, the song, the literature of other countries would be to dwarf our lives and render Ireland so much the poorer. It must be the experience of many who have moulded their lives to the endeavour to serve Ireland, that it has been almost a necessity to distract their thoughts from so much in our

history that is sad, and in our politics difficult and embarrassing, by the study of the languages and literatures of other countries. I am unable, moreover, to perceive where in the Irish-speaking periods of our history we are to find nobler ideals of a United Ireland than those to be found in our history of the past two hundred years, or where we are to find, for imitation and adoption, institutions more suited to our present needs than in the experience of other countries. Is it not best to look hopefully forward, garnering the experiences of the ages and of all peoples, rather than seek to live in and by the far past of our own country alone?

ALFRED WEBB.

TO STELLA.

Stars by the light they shed
Only are known,
Songs by the verse they wed
Time have outgrown ;
And that my verse may be
Tuned to eternity,
Shining with love of thee,
Light me alone.

Life to the lute of Love
Only will sing,
Few are the songs that move
After the Spring ;
And if the Spring be frore—
Spring that so soon is o'er—
What shall the Winter store
From harvesting?

OLIVER GOGARTY.

CRITICISM AND COURAGE.

WHenever any attempt is made in this country to set up a platform, however small, for the unprejudiced discussion of political and religious opinions and beliefs, it is always interesting to observe the numerous and subtle arguments employed in different quarters to prove that the process of argument is not to be applied to all beliefs. Some time ago I was present at a rather paradoxical discussion in a club, of which I have the honour to be a member, and which avowedly meets for the interchange of opinion. The subject under consideration was the need, as alleged, for independent thinking in Ireland; but the conclusion of the "discussion," if it may be so summed up, was that one should have as few opinions as possible, and no expression of them at all. The futility of trying to change anyone's intimate beliefs; the necessity and decorum of government officials saying nothing, even anonymously, in criticism of governmental practice; the propriety of teachers being obliged to resign if their opinions underwent any heterodox change, since in that case they were no longer qualified for their duties; the hardship of taking away "sources of comfort" in the shape of theological dogmas from those who had nothing to cling to but such comforts; the arrogance of those who set themselves up as dissenters from the majority-opinion, and so forth: the changes were rung by various speakers, men and women, on all these arguments for conformity, these counsels of quiescence. Let us never do or say anything that will cause the slightest mental change in anyone, was the rule of action to be logically deduced from the argument. From this to the proposition that the life of the oyster or the tortoise is to be preferred to the life of man is only a step; and the final prescription of conformity might run: "Let us eat, drink and sleep, and above all, *Let us keep our mouths shut.*" It is a small part of the paradox of conformity that this precept itself was volubly elaborated, and the doctrine of not changing our neighbour's beliefs was put forward by way of changing the beliefs of those of us who stood for the morality of progressive change.

In order to clear the discussion, then, let us take the commonest subject of public contention. In the case of politics it is quite obvious that everyone is seeking to in-

fluence public opinion in favour of the policy which he thinks desirable, or in which he is personally interested. In this country, political issues are discussed vigorously enough and often acrimoniously enough, and some of the gentlemen who warn us against giving pain by criticising old traditions have themselves very little hesitation about giving pain to political opponents or ascribing their actions to base motives. It is true, of course, that democratic politics in Ireland, as elsewhere, have to bear the brunt of official and other pressure. The Government, through its extensive beaureaucracy, and the Church, through its theological influence, exert an immense power which causes men to suppress their political convictions, or sub-consciously find arguments for suppressing them. What Government can do in that way we see every day; the spirit of Castlereagh is not dead in Dublin Castle, and the distribution of offices and favours affords an opportunity for the day-to-day repetition of the tactics by which the Act of Union was carried. As for the Church, we saw her political power during the Parnell crisis, and at present, for instance, we see her political influence exerted to press on members of Parliament and others a scheme of sectarian university "reform," for which there is little or no spontaneous public demand.

Notwithstanding these impediments and shackles, however, political discussion is comparatively free. Whenever anyone calls for a cessation of the political warfare and a "union of all classes," we know at once that he is a reactionary, well-meaning or otherwise. The real antithesis is not between politics and no-politics, but between good politics and bad; and part of good politics is to work for progress with as little personal ill-feeling and as much good taste as possible. In politics, then, we have little hesitation in "disturbing the beliefs" of those who would be glad to rest in the assurance that everything was for the best in the best-governed State in the world. And when we meet benign old people who think the "picturesque poverty" of the Irish peasant in the West is not to be disturbed as making for "spiritual excellence," we have, most of us, little compunction in shattering the "spiritual" dream. Political progress *must* involve change in political ideals and beliefs.

And the same falls to be said of literary and scientific discussion in the main. If a physician discovered a cure for cancer or tuberculosis, no one would dream for a moment of deterring him from publication on the ground

that he might disturb the hitherto-accepted view as to the origin and proper treatment of these diseases. In literature, too, criticism is free enough. Take at random any of the subjects of discussion or gossip in Dublin in the last year: Mr. Yeats' plays and Mr. O'Brien's "silence," the Plunkett policy, and the National Exhibition—on all these subjects we express ourselves with a commendable lack of reserve, though occasionally also with a boisterousness that, if not uniformly elevating, is at least not harmful.

The truth is that the kind of discussion which is most condemned and against which the "arguments" mentioned at the beginning are mainly directed, is the discussion of religious ideas. Those beliefs which are supposed to be most vital and important are those which are to be least examined, and the doctrines which are held to be most solidly established of all are thought to be the least able to bear criticism of any. No one would fear to discuss the propositions of Euclid, lest we might find them false, but most people fear to discuss their theological beliefs, lest, presumably, they might find them untenable; for, obviously, if they were certain of finding them true, they would welcome criticism. And one notes, thus, a kind of truce in Ireland between the rival Christian sects which bespeaks insincerity. The stage when Catholic and Protestant clergymen held public debates in the Rotunda on the merits of their respective creeds has long been passed. Doubtless it was realised that such performances were more likely to make Freethinkers than converts to either Catholicism or Protestantism. And so there has set in the ignoble fashion at present in vogue of discountenancing on both sides such discussion. Catholics make little or no open attempt to convert Protestants, and, beyond one or two irresponsible agencies, Protestants make little or no attempt to convert Catholics. Whenever a zealous Protestant, thinking he is carrying light unto darkness, drops a Protestant tract in the way of Catholics, the Catholic press raises an outcry as if some heinous offence had been committed, and the well-to-do Protestant, anxious to live on good terms with his Catholic neighbours, joins in condemning such tactics as "bad form." The whole phenomenon, it must be repeated, stands for insincerity, the insincerity of men who, conscious that they may be believing falsehood, yet lack the courage to submit their beliefs to the test of examination and criticism. Men who have truth are anxious and properly anxious to spread it, even as men loyally desiring the truth are concerned that other

men, equally sincere, should vitally differ from them. If any astronomer or physician put forward a scientific view on any aspect of his studies, he would be affected by the knowledge that other astronomers and physicians disagreed with him, and he would assuredly seek to clear the disagreement up. At the very least he would not shun the whole difficulty. Yet that is the course prescribed and pursued all round on questions of religion in Ireland. One interesting and typical incident, illustrating this, comes to my mind. Some months ago Father Sheehan delivered an address to the "Catholic Truth Society" in Dublin. In the course of his remarks he advocated the cultivation of "passionless" literature and the bowdlerising of poets like Burns and Byron, and in addition referred to the large numbers of cheap rationalist publications which were now openly sold in a "Catholic city" like Dublin, a fact which he deplored. Did he, however, recommend his hearers to peruse these books? Did he say, as one would expect a sincere and wise teacher to say: "Read, my friends, what the best minds have to say against you if you seek loyally the truth, for until you know the best that can be said against you, you know neither your weakness nor your strength?" Not at all. Father Sheehan merely fell back on the well-worn dictum that these were "immoral" books, to be shunned by the faithful. And when it is mentioned that the publications in question consist mostly of cheap reprints of standard works by men like Mill, Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Haeckel, Renan, and Matthew Arnold, the grossness of the libel may be estimated. At least Father Sheehan's creed did not deter him from bearing false witness against his neighbour, when that neighbour had the temerity to differ from his theology.

But that is the temper in which all such studies are met in Ireland. A cultivated ignorance, as ludicrous as it is contemptible, is the prevailing note. Read any popular journal and observe the tone of snobbish superiority to modern science and all that it stands for; so that when, as is often the case, we are warned against the "pride of knowledge," some of us are prone to reflect that, if that be a reprehensible vanity, the pride of ignorance must be considerably worse. You will find in any newspaper you take up, long accounts of the interminable laying of foundation stones of churches, of the continual opening of bazaars for ecclesiastical objects, of lugubrious addresses from prelates and priests on themes that belong to the mental atmosphere of the Middle Ages.

But of anything that connects with the real intellectual life of the world outside Ireland, little or nothing is heard. When, for instance, in an early number of this magazine, an article appeared on the Abbé Loisy from the pen of a French critic, a widely-circulated clerical weekly editorially declared it had never heard of Loisy and did not want to hear of him, the writer arguing, in bucolic fashion, that what did not interest him ought to interest no one else. A couple of years ago I heard a well-known Jesuit preacher, within a few months of the publication of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (which was itself a redaction of current continental scholarship) tell a rather high-class congregation that modern criticism had left the Bible untouched. To pretend that discoveries which tell against you do not exist, to belittle those who make them, and abuse those who publish them and, in short, to refuse to face the intellectual battle, confident in the final victory of the right, is the attitude of the theological champions to-day. And it is this mental and moral cowardice, for which orthodoxy is primarily responsible, that helps to keep us as a people intellectually inferior. A vital concern for truth more than for established beliefs correlates with all the other virtues that keep a nation progressive and alive.

It would, however, be idle to make light of the tremendous forces that oppose the rational discussion of such questions as I have touched upon, and which produce the corresponding insincerity. Vast vested interests of all kinds stand in the way, whereas those who follow truth loyally have a thankless task, which nothing but an inward sanction can sustain. Yet they may reflect that never yet was progress possible without intellectual change, never yet did humanity advance a step without the breaking of old traditions and the discarding of old beliefs. The true humanist will assuredly wish that such change as must be, should entail as little pain as possible, since it is not pain but growth in knowledge that is desired. But some pain is inevitable, and it is in the readiness to face it that true courage lies. For a nation, certainly it bodes ill when, as a mass, it is afraid of truth, or at least afraid of the sacrifices by which alone truth can be attained.

FREDERICK RYAN.

STAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

THE Irish National Theatre began as humbly as the Theatre Libre in Paris, and the circumstances of both are similar. It is curious that Antoine was an employé in a gas company, and Mr. Fay happens to be in some like employment. Antoine has become one of the most successful actors in Paris, more even than a successful actor he has become an actor of genius ; and Mr. Fay, though we do not pretend to think that he is in any way comparable to Antoine, is an actor not without talent. He has shown himself possessed of a real sense of humour and a power of infecting his audience with his enjoyment of the drolleries of life. But Antoine, a great actor, is a unique stage manager, and has done more for stage management in Paris than anyone else. It is quite true to say that the Theatre Francais does little more than watch and imitate his stage management and his methods of acting. Antoine has produced plays in verse and in prose, and he knows how to treat one as well as the other. It is not our intention to be beguiled into a discussion concerning the kind of stage management suitable to verse plays. The treatment they need is of a different kind from that of prose, but their arrangement cannot be left to chance. A Hungarian rhapsody is not played in the same manner as a classic composition. There must be order in disorder, in fact, the disorder must be only a seeming, for if we subtract order from Art we get life. Our discussion is strictly limited to Mr. Fay's method or want of method in presenting the play on the stage. The actors and actresses in a National Theatre play scramble about practically anyhow, and they remind one very often of three little boys and a little girl reciting a story on a barn door. In "The Shadowy Waters" the actors stood in different corners of the stage, and fired off their lines, reminding one of a game of "Aunt Sally" ; a line was drawn out and sent whirling across the stage. Mr. Fay seems to delight in what is known in rehearsals as "dropping the scene." The object of every other stage manager is to avoid intervals between the speeches, and to weld every part together till the play is but one thing ; but Mr. Fay's intention, if he has any definite intention, seems to be to disintegrate. The simplest stage tactics are unknown to him, such for in-

stance as the knowledge of the effect gained by sending one—shall we say of a group of four?—up the stage. Four men are discussing whether they will start at the end of the month on a shooting excursion. They urge their different opinions, and the greater part of the discussion is occupied by A. B. and C. It is therefore the duty of the stage manager to send D. up the stage to examine guns which are on the rack. He examines these, and, when his cue comes, he walks down the stage and tells them that if they want him to join the excursion it must take place on the 29th. This is the A. B. C. and D. of stage management but our contention is that Mr. Fay does not know his A. B. and C. of stage management, and we are anxious that he should set about learning it.

Words are dependent on the position of the actor on the stage and the gesture that accompanies them. Sometimes it is well that the actor should speak the lines sitting still, and it is well sometimes that he should speak them on a rise. We will give an example of how the author's meaning may be spoiled by a change of position. In Ibsen's play, "Ghosts," in the third act, Oswald is telling his mother that he feels that the illness of which the doctor has warned him is coming back. He fears an abasement of his reason, and he asks his mother to give him some morphia pills that will kill him. She begs him not to lay such a task upon her, saying that she will always be by to look after him. He answers: "But you may not always be there, I shall fall into the hands of strangers"; and then she says, "What a thing you ask of me, I who gave you life." Oswald's answer is: "A nice kind of life it was that you gave me." The actor spoke these lines on a rise; getting up from his chair, he went up the stage speaking them at the top of his voice, "A nice kind of life it was that you gave me." Ibsen's point is that Oswald knows, almost from the beginning of the play, his pre-destined end. To speak these lines rising destroys the author's meaning. The lines should be spoken pensively, looking across the room, almost as one speaking in a dream: "A nice kind of life it was that you gave me."

A piece well-staged—staged with imagination, amounts almost to a re-writing. Here is an instance: A strike leader has betrayed his comrades—we need not enter into what the betrayal was—suffice it to say that he relied on his personal influence to convince them that he had not betrayed them. He has failed to do so, and returns to the house. The mob is about the house, and he foresees his

death, and resolves to anticipate the design of the mob by taking poison. The author's stage direction is the ordinary stage direction—"He drinks the poison"—and the stage manager has to settle how the hero's death will be presented. Is he to drink the poison and roll about the ground in agony? Or is he to wait and show terror of the poison? Both situations are possible. But Antoine, intervening, says, "No, we won't do either. Take the glass, Dick, you are standing at the other side of the table—place one hand on the table, and as you lift the glass to your lips the curtain falls." But then Antoine's stage management is miraculous.

Mr. Fay has been praised a great deal. He has been to London, and Mr. William Archer and Mr. Walkley have spoken of his plays as "folk plays," and his talent as "folk talent," and all manner of "folk smoke" has been raised to signal him. We hope that Mr. Fay will not be beguiled, deluded, destroyed by the praise of these journalists, who would have praised any little bushman who came over to London with a boomerang. The same little bushman would be praised in Paris. It is the custom of journalists to praise strangers. For who knows but the boomerang may make a hit? In France one nods the head, hearing the Kaffir tongue spoken, "How nice, how pretty, how harmonious." But Mr. Fay is more important than a bushman with a club to flourish. He is the founder of the "Irish National Theatre." We do not speak derisively, Mr. Fay has managed very well; he manages to struggle on, and one should not ask more of any man. We were about to say he has received very little support, but that after all cannot be truly said of a man who has found an admirer to buy him a theatre.

This article is not written in any carping spirit, it is written by one who has always taken an interest in the stage, who has thought about it, and who foresees that Mr. Fay must apply himself to learn a very complicated and difficult art. Very few authors can put a piece on the stage effectively. Actors are generally good stage managers. Mr. Fay is the exception; he must take pains, work at it, develop whatever talent for the art there is in him; and if he feels that there is no germ that can be developed it will be well for him to employ a stage manager. A theatre can dispense with everything else, with scenery, costumes, wigs and paint; the author and the stage manager are the two essentials, and we do not know which is the most indispensable. PAUL RUTLEDGE.

OUR NEED OF AN IMPERSONAL JUDGMENT.

TO-DAY we are very insistent with ourselves about the formation of an independent judgment, we are proving many things and we are finding ourselves intellectually by the old process—indigenous to all re-kindlings of mental life—of rebellion against that which has received the sanction of custom. We will have no etiquette of thought, or of art, be it literary, dramatic, or pictorial; all systems are open to our search, and we will choose for ourselves, and be primitive or decadent, or both together, as seems good to us. In matters of opinion, political, industrial, or social, we are proudly individualistic, and refuse leadership with scorn, whereby no doubt we keep alive the spirit of private discrimination, though we at the same time inflict serious damage upon the causes for which we work. We are as a people averse to the subordination of personal predilection, or private opinion to any cause, and this characteristic of ours, being so marked as to be every day manifest in our public affairs, deserves more consideration than it is wont to receive. Few people who have tried to lead us have not known the break between old comrades, which has come from dissension upon some question of opinion; “secession” is a frequent occurrence—especially in political bodies of every shade of thought; adverse and bitterly personal criticism of good workers by those allied with them is no rare thing. There is something very discouraging in the thought of how much real work has been checked by this impatience of a differing point of view, and the practical man often retires from the labour of leading so individualistic a people into prosperity. But for the philosopher there is interest in the speculation as to whether this tendency is not a characteristic of great intellectual value, whether it is not part of our native genius, carrying in it those seeds of perpetuity which were in that Grecian individualism, which wrecked a material kingdom, but founded an intellectual empire.

Greece, broken and deposed in her own day, is yet ruling to-day; perhaps Ireland, in ruining many plans for her material prosperity, is only showing that redundancy of the power of the individual mind which will found a new empire of the soul.

For honest individualism this theory may be advanced,

for individualism which expresses itself in "secession and re-formation under a new name," but we have also in our mental equipment one thing which is altogether ineffectual and entirely unlovely—an egotism which manifests itself in recrimination, in small-minded personalities, in loud attributing of motives to persons with whom we are not in complete agreement. This egotism blinds our eyes to the worth of those who differ from us; it makes us speak intemperately about a man's capacity for philanthropic work, because we do not hold with his ideas on temperance legislation, it makes us turn and rend those with whom we were joined in social labour, because they have ventured to say that something whereof we approve has done an injury to the State.

This extreme development of individualism amounts sometimes to a disease; all the energy which should go out in advocacy of the cause which we have at heart is turned by a gust of personal predilection into angry defence of our own special point of view, and bitter protest against our former comrade's opinion, with the result that while we quarrel the work stands half finished.

It is not so much this disease of individualism as the individualistic instinct itself that interests the philanthropic observer, yet in the arena of wrangling opinions there is an abstract interest and poetry, for we can observe a people which will give itself wholly or not at all to its dearest cause. A people which will tolerate no schism in itself, which will cast out from its councils the most devoted worker who shall venture to express an opinion which is deemed heretical, however well-known may be his integrity and single-mindedness.

The saner individualism which leads to secession and continuance of the same work by different workers, and the disease of individualism which has so often turned our public meetings and legislative deliberations into bitter wars of words, alike give food for thought to the philosopher who tests the life around him and draws out its gold unerringly. But the philosopher can see the beauty of ineffectuality, the glory of proud individualism which starves rather than conform in any particular; to him it is given to wait patiently, taking each process, each eccentricity, each idiosyncrasy, and playing with it in reflective joy; across his mind no thought of failure or success passes, his pleasure is solely in the endeavour; whereas the man who lives in the world hastens through the endeavour, judging its worth only by its result.

So far we have been food for the philosopher, but it seems that perhaps a change is near, that we shall learn to curb our individualism so that it shall wear the harness of practicality. When this comes about we shall perhaps build for ourselves a material prosperity, and we shall laugh at the days when a trifling disagreement permitted us to lay down our tools, or to use them in warfare of comrades. What we wonder is, whether our practical men are strong enough to make us practical, and whether our philosophers are brave enough to show us beauty in achievement, the soul in the well-fed body. Until now our philosophers have not learned this knowledge; they have reminded us that the fool is the wise man, that failure wears a crown, that poverty possesses its mine of wealth. What we need to-day is a philosophy which will also have a word for those who care for the practicalities, a philosophy with those two sides which are part of every great parable. So that the same man may speak to diverse hearers words which shall serve alike those who realise the significance of the parable, and those who merely study its outer seeming.

When our philosophers are strong they will show us that we must keep our old knowledge, and never dare to sell our soul for any gift, but they will also speak to us and tell us that each idiosyncrasy of opinion is not in very truth our soul, and we shall learn to remember that our soul concerns itself only with its own matters, and that opinion, predilection, personal bias, are no such gigantic things as we have deemed them in our perfervid days. There are those who will say that we shall thus lose beauty, and lose that proud contempt of the vulgarity of tangible results which has, they say, made us the more spiritual in that it has led us to refuse any sacrifice to our ideal which shall entail loss of personal completeness. It will be for our philosophers to show us that our country is no foolish child-like creature, rejoicing in the agony which is the meed of the ineffectuality which has been our most common gift to her, but a brave woman longing for brave service, and believing that any loss or suffering which must come should not be thrust upon her by those who love her, but should be borne by them for her sake.

FERGUS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE.

THE law of supply and demand are as important in the book market as in any other. The recent increasing stirring of general interest in Celtic matters of every sort has caused a corresponding output of literature to satisfy the varying desires of different classes of readers. Some are students of the old language, some wish to make acquaintance with the old romances and verse, without the immense toil of learning the speech in which they were composed, others would like to know something of old times and old stories, and are content to receive them clothed in modern garb. Others do not care so much for the mere literature as for the history, and others yet again delight in the mysticism of the Celtic spirit. These last best find what they want in the work of certain poets and dreamers of to-day who draw much of their inspiration and atmosphere from the ancient springs; for another mode of expressing this mystic spirit they should visit the collection of pictures by A. E., now to be seen in Molesworth Street, an absolutely unique attempt to interpret in colour the Celtic mood and the divine vision which he has already set forth in verse. On my table I have books that will appeal to each of the other classes of reader I have mentioned. The School of Irish Learning has done most excellent work during the two years since its establishment, and now it has given a permanent tangible proof of its activity and efficiency in two publications. One of these "A Selection from the Old Irish Glosses" with notes and a vocabulary, by Professor Strachan, whose knowledge of Old Irish is probably unsurpassed, is invaluable to the student, but can hardly appeal to the general reader. The Journal of the School, *Eriu*, edited by Kuno Meyer and John Strachan, while primarily for scholars, contains a considerable amount of matter interesting to anyone who without knowing the language wishes to know something of Celtic literature in its original shape and native garb, for besides contributions on grammar etc., he will find various poems and tales in prose with English translations. To Mr. Edward Gwynn is due a text and English version of a poem of nearly three hundred verses, "The Burning of Finn's House," Kuno Meyer contributes versions of four short poems and a prose account of

the Death of Conla ; Mr. O'Keeffe translations of two tales ; Mr. O'Nowlan a version of the "Quarrel about the Loaf," a poem in the Book of Leinster. An important piece of work is a text of the Leabhar Oiris, or Book of Chronicles, an account of the battles of Brian Boromhe from 979, followed by short annals of events to 1027 A.D. This occupies some forty pages of *Eriu*, and has been prepared by Mr. R. I. Best who last year published a good translation of M. Arbois de Jubainville's *Cycle Mythologique Irlandais*.

Hugh Roe O'Donnel and the Earl of Tyrone were the leaders of the Irish insurrection which harassed Elizabeth so sorely in the closing years of her reign, but whose failure only rendered more complete the subjugation of the Irish race. *The Broken Sword of Ulster* [Dublin, Hodges, Figgis & Co.] is a narrative of the course of this rebellion told by Richard Cuninghame with admirable verve and freshness and picturesque force. It is not a work of original research in out-of-the-way records, it throws no new light on the facts as already common property, but it is very agreeable reading. It is more akin to epic than plain history ; some of the episodes are narrated with astonishing fire and spirit, for example, the two escapes of Hugh Roe O'Donnel from Dublin Castle, recounted in the fourth and fifth chapters. In the Epilogue Mr. Cuninghame asks—

"What now is needed by Ulster and by Ireland ? Equal laws and just ? Yes, for every class and creed and lineage. And yet there is more !

Colleges and schools ? Yes, colleges and schools, with real education, till every town and hamlet beams, if you will, with intellectual light. But yet there is more !"

This more is "faith, hope, and the greatest of all, charity."

"These are the God-provided cures for the woes of Ireland ! When they have been accepted in the intelligence, and become operative in the life, then shall have come to Ireland her golden age, the real balm for all her wounds ; her discontent shall have passed away as the mists of night before the sun, and the weary land shall rest."

But this is little more than rhetoric, there was no need of such an epilogue, it is out of keeping and is distinctly below the rest of the volume in style. This is the more to be regretted as *The Broken Sword of Ulster* is one of the pleasantest books of its kind.

Those who without any knowledge of the language, or

desire for accurate translations of old tales, yet wish to know about life in ancient Ireland, will find Miss Eleanor Hull's little book, "*Pagan Ireland*" exactly what they want. Miss Hull has already done good work in her "*Cuchullin Saga*" in the Grimms' Library. Her judgment in selection is excellent, and her scheme and arrangement could not easily be clearer or more straightforward. In her preface she reminds us that there is no great king of Ireland but has his own romance, and some fine tale told of his doings.

"These stories I have told in this little book and in the one that is to follow, not in a critical way, for the learned or for wise people, but simply, as the old storytellers told them at the kingly feasts for the pleasure of the young folk of Ireland.

To make them easier to understand, I have tried in the first part of this book to explain what sort of place to live in Ireland was in those early days, and how people managed things, and how they thought and talked and acted."

There we have the plan of the book in brief. At the outset we are warned that though there is possibly a foundation of fact in the old legends, we can never hope to distinguish how much is fact and how much is fiction. They are interesting chiefly because they show us how our forefathers thought about their own past history. Then we get a very short but clear account of the five great settlements in Ireland, the last of which brought the Milesians, the race from which the true Celtic people are descended. Next follows a description of the condition of the country during pagan times, both social and economic, the constitution of Government, the clan, the duties and privileges of king, priest, bard and lawgiver, the position of women and children, the way of life of the people, their dwellings, dress, burying places, their assemblies, and the administration of justice, nothing almost is omitted, and there is not the least confusion in all the mass of detail from which the facts are chosen. Any one who turns to Dr. Joyce's *Social Ireland* will appreciate the difficulty of presenting a vivid picture of Irish ways and manners on a small scale, yet Miss Hull has succeeded wonderfully in the limited space at her command. Add that she has given a very clear and concise exposition of the chief characteristics of the Brehon Laws, and that the whole account is diversified and illustrated by means of stories taken from the old romantic legends, and one may form some idea of a very difficult task triumphantly accomplished. It would be hard to praise over-much. The second part of the book is

a narrative drawn from the old stories, and is called "The Romance of the Early Kings." This would be a good text-book for school use. It is very well calculated to rouse a desire to know more of its subject. Pagan Ireland is the first volume of a series to be published by David Nutt under the general title of Epochs of Irish History. The price is three and sixpence net. It is a pity the books are not more pleasant in appearance, they are sufficiently readable but not attractive, an unusual thing with any publication of Mr. Nutt's, who understands as well as anyone the art of making beautiful books. Nowadays the cheap reprint is the true edition de luxe; this paradox can be verified at any time by a visit to a bookshop. One of the last series is Mr. Grant Richard's *Smaller Classics*, 32 mo. in cloth sixpence, in leather a shilling, paper, type, and margins admirable. Already there are five volumes, two anthologies, love songs, and cradle songs, very much like their numerous predecessors. The third is Norman Gale's "*A Country Mouse*." [O that it had been the *Orchard Songs*!] and then the inevitable Rubâiyât. But every lover of verse will rejoice at the inclusion of A. E. Housman's delightful *Shropshire Lad*, too few people know it, and I hope this edition will have a large sale. I quote one poem, among so many good it is hard to choose.

Along the fields, as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen, over stile and stone,
Was talking to itself alone.
"Oh, who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed.
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love."
And, sure enough, beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen leaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And, plain for her to understand,
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

"*The Wanderer and Other Poems*," by Leila MacDonald, [Fisher Unwin] is a slender sheaf with a dainty fragrance from one or two delicious blossoms that perfume the whole.

The poem that gives its name to the book is a kind of pastoral into which setting comes the Wanderer, a man of unquenchable sorrow for a lost love, which he regains in death. Those who know the "*Savoy*" will remember "*The Love of the Poor*," which appeared in the second number. Though lacking the maturer touch of the *Wanderer* and the *Coming of Death*, and inferior in mere form and metric, it still has some haunting passages. Imagine the Giles and Joan of the "*Freeing of Pharamond*" grown old and in distress, their golden days withered, despairing even of food, forced to turn to the chilly kindness of an English workhouse, where man and wife are sundered, and must live in separate wards, and there you have the situation.

I mind me, wife, when we were young
The fields and woods we strolled among
Knew more of grief and human ills
Than we poor children dreamed or knew,
When you loved me and I loved you.

But now the evil days have come, and their only refuge is the workhouse. However, death brings them release. There is a great deal of tender feeling and pathos in the poem, but the soul of their dead child is an unconvincing *dramatis persona*.

The rest of the book consists of twelve *Refrains*. These are lyrics, some of which are sweet and ring true. Among them the most pleasing are those called *Prisoner*, *Unwoven*, *Farewell*. I think, though, that the Lover's Lament is the best thing in the whole volume. Here is the first of its three charming stanzas—

In the old walled garden when the year was young
The tulips scorned the drooping daffodils ;
April flushed red in the pear-tree's glowing buds,
In the old walled garden when the year was young.
In the old walled garden when the year was young
I kissed the scented lilac at her breast,
Mine was the lovely shyness of her eyes,
In the old walled garden when the year was young.

F. M. ATKINSON.

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